

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. The indication that claims 5 and 6 contain allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. Claims 5 and 6 have been amended and are now independent claims. In addition, claims 1 and 10 have been amended and new dependent claim 16 has been presented. Accordingly, claims 1-16 are respectfully resubmitted for further consideration.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by DE 4227780 (“Prinz”). In addition, claims 1, 3, 8-10, and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,908,222 (“Wier”). Each of these rejections should be withdrawn because neither Prinz nor Wier disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

As amended, claims 1 and 10 both recite a “pretensioner for increasing the restraint force of a seat belt on an occupant.” The pretensioner recited in claim 1 includes among other possible things: (a) “a bent tubular member having an *approximately constant inner diameter* and comprising a linear portion”; and (b) a piston that “is configured to move *entirely within the linear portion*[.]” Similarly, the pretensioner recited in claim 10 includes, among other possible things: (a) “a tubular member having an *approximately constant inner diameter*”; (b) “a piston slidably positioned within a linear portion of the tubular member”; and (c) that “the piston is configured to move *entirely within the linear portion*[.]”

In contrast, Prinz fails to teach, disclose, or suggest a tubular member in which a piston moves and that has “an approximately constant diameter.” Instead, as shown in Figure 1, Prinz teaches: (a) that the cylinder 20 in which the piston 12 moves is much narrower at an upper portion; and (b) that the internal diameter of the base 16 around the gas generator 18 is different than the internal diameter of the base 16 immediate behind the gas generator 18. Thus, the rejection of claims 1 and 10 based on Prinz should be withdrawn.

Wier fails to teach, disclose, or suggest that “the piston is configured to move *entirely within the linear portion*.” Rather, the movement of the piston 12 is along an arcuate path within the curved tube 10. *See* Wier at Fig. 1b. Thus, the rejection of claims 1 and 10 based on Wier should be withdrawn.

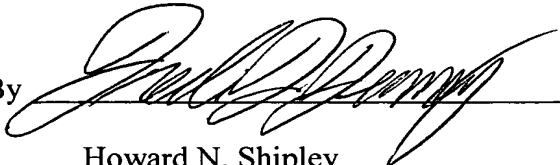
Claims 2-4 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and claims 11-16 depend from claim 10. Therefore, each of these dependent claims is allowable over Wier and Prinz for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the other patentable limitations recited therein.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-4 and 7-15 is respectfully requested.

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 1-16 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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